

Action in the Face of Opposition

Mark 3:1-6 NIV; Mark 3:20-27 NIV; Mark 3:32-35 NIV

- I. Don't be surprised by opposition.
 - a. Those who were supposed to lead were more concerned about their own positions than the people. *Jesus is grieved and angered by their response – a man's life was healed and they wanted to kill the One who healed Him because He threatened their hold on religious people.
 - b. Those who were supposed to love Him wanted to control Him for His sake. "Take charge"; ESV "seize Him"; NASB "take custody of Him."
 - c. The greater darkness behind all human opposition. Ephesians 6:12 We're not fighting against flesh and blood but a kingdom of darkness – Satan, rulers, principalities, and powers – a third of the angels fell are part of a kingdom that is seeking to destroy you and me by any means possible. They are led by a former arch angel – we don't know much more than that. They are insidious because they are invisible to our eyes.
 - d. Jesus told His disciples frankly: Luke 10:3 NIV "Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves." Don't expect it to be easy to follow Jesus.

- II. The great adventure we're on.
 - a. Every great adventure has opposition that must be overcome. The adventure is more exciting if:
 - i. The stakes are high.
 - ii. The enemy is formidable.
 - iii. The odds seem to be against those who must overcome.
 - b. Great dramas:
 - i. 24 – Jack Bauer saving the world from terrorism; but the terrorists aren't the only one's he fighting; he's also fighting bureaucracy often by doing what those from the FBI and CIA are unwilling to do. Don't become emotionally attached to anyone but Jack, because almost everyone close to him betrays him or dies.
 - ii. The Matrix – Morpheus explains that a choice must be made – one pill will lead to the uncomfortable truth, the other will put him back in his bed and all this will be a bad dream and he can go on in his comfortable, but deceived life. Neo chooses the red pill and faces, not just the darkness controlling things, but also those deceived by the darkness.
 - iii. The Lord of the Rings – Sauron's darkness permeates everything – the terrifying eye; he has direct servants – orcs, and those who he has deceived into following him – Saruman. If he finds the controlling ring of power – all will be lost, darkness will rule, all light and hope will be vanquished. *Victory will come, the ancient prophecies say, not from the powerful, but from the

- halfings – the hobbits who have no powers and are marked by their love of comfort. *Tolkien’s essay on fairy tales
- c. Pilgrim’s Progress – John Bunyan – 1678 – over 200 languages and has never been out of print. The story of Pilgrim and his journey from the city of destruction to the celestial city.
- i. The stakes are high – eternal life or eternal death – stakes couldn’t be higher. He finds a book (or did the book find him) and as he reads a burden grows on his back. Someone else has left the city and left behind drawings of the celestial city.
 - ii. The enemy is formidable. The dark lord keeps the people in the city of destruction busy working for their own survival. NO one gets to leave his city. When Pilgrim decides to leave he begs his wife to come along. She won’t go with him and makes him choose; a friend named Obstinate tackles him to keep him from going; another friend, Pliable goes for awhile with him but then abandons him when it becomes difficult.
 - iii. The odds are against him. Along the way he faces those who would mislead him – one Mr. Worldly-wise who tells him the burden is imaginary; one Mr. Legality who says the way to remove the burden is by keeping the law; he faces the slough of despair and when he gets close to the narrow gate there are intimidating lions on both sides making him afraid to enter.
- d. His journey of course, is our journey.
- i. John Bunyan wrote this from prison when the church of England had him imprisoned for holding meetings not sanctioned by the church. Just because people are religious doesn’t mean they are speaking the truth. Mark 8:15 ESV “And he cautioned them, saying, “Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.” “See that no one deceives you...false Christs, false prophets – one centered on rules and moralistic religion, the other focused on comfort right now – both want you to follow them - the truth is a Person who died for us and wants a relationship with us.
 - ii. Choosing Jesus over family. “Whoever loves...” Jesus told us it would be a narrow road that leads to life and that the road to destruction is wide and many are on it. *Catalina’s story – literally took custody – make a bigger circle. Jesus’ family was eventually saved. Part two of Pilgrim’s progress is his wife and kids leaving the city of destruction; I’ve seen this same thing happen in my own family. You have to be willing to go alone. “Though none go with me, still I will follow.”
 - iii. Spiritual darkness either wants us to live for survival run by the fear of lack – so chasing after money; or wants us to eat the

blue pill and just live for comforting ourselves now and then in retirement.

- III. Jesus helps us to act in the face of opposition.
- a. He defeated darkness for us. Someone stronger needs to come.
 - i. God took on human flesh and walked among us. His authority was complete while He walked on this earth. The goods were the people He set free.
 - ii. Then He died on the cross for us all and removed the authority of darkness over the human race. Colossians 2:13-15 NIV When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you[Ⓜ] alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”
 - b. When He left He gave us His authority and His Presence over darkness.
 - i. 16:17a the enemy has to get us to believe lies to exert his power and influence in our lives.
 - ii. “I am with you always” “There I am in your midst.”
 - c. He sent us out together. When He told them to go – it was plural – go helping one another – the strategy of hell is to divide us. We are a new family – those who do the will of God.
 - i. Sam – “I know you do Mr. Frodo and I’m going with you.”
 - ii. Pilgrim’s Progress – Evangelist can see the burden and tells him how to get rid of it; Help pulls him out of the slough of despair; Wisdom tells him the lions are on chains; Faithful starts walking with him.
 - iii. I hope you watch Sondra and John’s story – amazing!!!

What are you facing today?